

Members Present

John McNeal, Chair
Jessie Welch, Co-Chair
Doug Denison
Lauren Devore
Ken Grant
Richard Klepner
Nicole Majeski
Louisa Phillips
John Sisson
Michael Wagner
Todd Webb

State Council for Persons with Disabilities
Governor's Appointee
Department of State
Sussex County
AAA
Office of Highway Safety (OHS)
DelDOT
AHA
Wilmapco/DTC
Department of Education
DelDOT

Members Absent

Helen Arthur
David Bartoo
Marsha Carson
Kimberly Holmes
Bill Jiron Jr.
Reed Macmillan
William Payne

DHSS
DNREC
DOS ADA Title II Coordinator
Delaware Healthcare Association
Governor's Appointee
Dover/Kent MPO
Caregiver

DelDOT Support Staff

Maria Andaya
Farzana Atique

DelDOT
McCormick Taylor

Guests

Lt. Tracy Condon
Anson Gock
Mike Hahn
Ryan Hollingshead
Jared Kauffman
Jonathan Kirsch
Chip Kneavel
C.R. McLeod
Paul Moser
Tom Nickel
Linda Osiecki
Jim Pappas
Tigist Zegeye

DSP
DelDOT
DelDOT
Wilmington
DTC-Planning
AHA
DelDOT
DelDOT
DelDOT
DelDOT
DelDOT
WILMAPCO

CALL TO ORDER AND INTRODUCTIONS

The meeting was called to order at 10:05 am by Chair John McNeal.

MEETING MINUTES REVIEW (July 23, 2019)

Upon the motion of Mr. John Sisson and seconded by Ms. Nicole Majeski, the minutes for the July 23, 2019 meeting were approved.

PEDESTRIAN FATALITIES UPDATE

Mr. Richard Klepner gave an update on pedestrian fatalities. At this point there have been 23 fatalities; last year at this time, there were 16. Pedestrian fatalities are currently 21% of total traffic fatalities, a percentage similar to previous years.

Mr. McNeal asked what Delaware's ranking was nationwide in pedestrian fatalities per capita last year. Mr. Klepner informed that Delaware ranked 21st; the lower ranking was not due to a significant decrease in pedestrian fatalities in Delaware, rather an increase of pedestrian fatalities in other states.

PEDESTRIAN SAFETY AWARENESS MONTH ACTIVITIES

Mr. Chip Kneavel gave a presentation on Pedestrian Safety Events for Pedestrian Safety Awareness Month in October. The Education and Enforcement Subcommittee decided to hold pedestrian safety activities at homeless centers since many of the pedestrian fatalities were homeless. Events were organized in each county. One of the posters shown at the events depicts a car's stopping distance at different car speeds, and the visibility of a pedestrian in clothing of different colors as well as reflective gear. There was useful input from participants from the perspective of pedestrians, as well as concerns in their local area. At the events, reflective gear was distributed to the participants which included washable stickers that can be put on clothing or other items. Some participants immediately put them on their clothes, shoes or backpacks. Local police and State Troopers attended the events in Kent and Sussex Counties. In Kent County, one participant remarked it was the first time he talked to and shook hands with a police person.

Extra materials were left at the sites for additional future clients to access. Participants were encouraged to be pedestrian safety ambassadors to their friends. Mr. Kneavel showed some pictures from the different locations. The Seaford Cold Purple Shelter would be an effective location during upcoming cold weather season. In Dover, they visited the men's shelter of the Dover Interfaith Mission for Housing. One of the things learned was that people don't want to be seen where they are sleeping; this is one of the reasons why black reflective strips were chosen for distribution. Instead of asking people to wear bright color neon clothes, they only need a couple of reflective strips on their clothes.

The third location was in New Castle County at the Goodwill parking lot at the intersection of Philadelphia Pike and Harvey Road. This location was proposed by Troop 1. It was a windy day, but it was a good outreach event. Subcommittee participants observed jaywalking and midblock crossing near the location; also observed were some cars passed a stopped school bus.

Mr. Kneavel informed that they plan to do these kinds of events more regularly. Mr. Kneavel also noted that having shelter staff members present at these events is helpful as they can pass on the information to the guests in the future. Mr. Sisson suggested that we can leave the materials and train the staff members at the shelters so they can educate the guests of the shelters and hand out the materials.

Mr. Sisson asked if they found any concerning issues of literacy as sometimes the persons' comprehension of the literature is limited. Lt. Condon noted that they had good conversations with participants, and they understood the information that was provided. Mr. Sisson noted that verbal interaction is important. Lt. Condon also informed that they have received some good tips regarding where to hold future programs.

Ms. Lauren Devore noted that she was pleased that Ms. Linda Osiecki mentioned Georgetown as another Sussex County Code Purple location. She mentioned there are issues regarding the homeless people in Georgetown.

Ms. Jessica Welch asked if materials can be handed out to hotels as sometimes the hotels give vouchers to the homeless people. Mr. Kirch asked whether there is enough reflective material for distribution. Ms. Majeski noted that there are 2000 reflective materials and she asked that DelDOT order more.

Mr. Klepner also provided information about some of the pedestrian safety activities that OHS has done over the month. They include providing brochures and leaflets to transit passengers in high crash routes. There is also a scheduled event at the Brandywine Zoo where safety information and reflective materials are to be distributed.

AUTO TECHNOLOGY AND PEDESTRIAN SAFETY

Mr. Ken Grant of AAA gave a presentation on the study of pedestrian detection systems for autonomous vehicles. There is much talk about autonomous cars, but little understanding of what automation really means. Currently, the advertising of one auto manufacturer shows videos of people reading a book behind the wheel of a car at 50 mph; Mr. Grant noted that we are not at that stage yet. Features are named as self-driving mode, but self-driving mode is not a reality yet.

One of the car features being promoted is the pedestrian braking system. The thought process is that if a vehicle has this system, the driver can relax and not be concerned about pedestrians as the car will take care of it. AAA conducted a study to see how the systems are working; the results were not encouraging. AAA conducted the research with the Automotive Club of Southern California's Automotive Research Center in Los Angeles, California. The testing was conducted in Fontana, California. Four commercially available vehicles were selected for testing the capabilities of pedestrian detection system: the 2019 Chevy Malibu, 2019 Honda Accord, 2019 Tesla Model 3 and 2019 Toyota Camry. A video of the testing was shown. Mr. Grant discussed some of the findings of the testing:

- When encountering a child darting from between two cars, with the vehicle traveling at 20 mph during daytime, a collision was avoided only 11 percent of time.
- Following a right-hand turn, all the test vehicles collided with the adult pedestrian.

- When approaching two adults standing alongside the road, with the vehicle travelling at 20 mph, a collision was avoided 20 percent of the time.
- At night, the systems failed as none of them detected or reacted to the adult pedestrian.

Mr. Grant noted that the results were not encouraging. AAA's message is that even though the marketing department is showcasing new features, drivers still need to be cautious and not rely solely on technologies that require lots of improvement.

Mr. Kneavel asked whether the advertising agency can be held liable if pedestrian accidents occur due to false advertising for vehicular safety technology. Mr. Kirsch remarked that there was a case in New York where both the state agency and the engineer who signed on the roadway design were held liable for a pedestrian accident.

Mr. McNeal mentioned that pedestrians also have a responsibility to choose safe actions; people need to have one hundred percent attention on the road when driving the car and, similarly, pedestrians need to pay attention when crossing roadways. Mr. McNeal remarked that with so many technological items distracting drivers and pedestrians nowadays, it is difficult to concentrate on the roadway; he suggested that some concrete recommendations come out of the Pedestrian Council to make the roadway a safer place for all.

Mr. Kauffman remarked that we should also emphasize on the planning components and private subdivisions. We are putting origin and destination across the high-speed roadways and are asking the pedestrian to cross the road and not creating a safe condition for the pedestrian.

OTHER BUSINESS

Mr. McNeal remarked that the Council has given recommendations to the Governor, but the question is whether these recommendations are being heard and followed through.

Ms. Andaya remarked that there were 21 recommendations over the years and the annual report each year gave an update of the status of the recommendations. Some of the recommendations are easy to follow through such as changing wording in the defensive driving manual or updating the E-Crash data report, whereas some other recommendations require time to implement.

Mr. Sisson inquired whether it is worth reviewing those recommendations. Ms. Andaya remarked that she will send out the draft annual report in the first week of January so that everyone can review.

Mr. Klepner remarked there have been problems with the implementation of the recommendations as the way the mission statement is worded, the recommendations are made to the Governor for DelDOT. He remarked that in Legislative and Education subcommittees some of the recommendations fall on the responsibility of the OHS or local police agencies, but since the recommendations come from DelDOT they do not make the annual report's recommendation list. Mr. Klepner asked whether the wording of the mission statement needs to be changed to push other agencies apart from DelDOT to have more responsibilities.

Mr. Todd Webb remarked that having different entities being part of the Council will help generate more cooperation among agencies to solve the pedestrian problems. He mentioned the importance of having the statewide planning agency and different municipalities in the Pedestrian Council. Mr. Kirch suggested that Dee Durham of District 2 Council in New Castle County can be a good addition to the group as her area covers Concord Pike, which has many pedestrian safety issues.

Mr. Klepner inquired whether there is any update on the status of DelDOT's Statewide Pedestrian Action Plan. Ms. Andaya replied that the Built Environment subcommittee is looking into it.

Ms. Majeski inquired whether the Council can add new members to the committee. Mr. McNeal replied that the Council can recommend new members to the Governor, who then can appoint them. It was decided that subcommittees look into the list of agencies that can be recommended to add to the Pedestrian Council before the next Pedestrian Council meeting in January.

ADJOURN

The meeting was adjourned at 11:20 am. The next meeting is on January 28, 2020 at 10:00 am.